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The Gem State Guardian

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Idaho Youth Challenge Academy opens its doors

By Col. Tim Marsano

The Idaho Youth Challenge Academy welcomed its first class in January. Ninety-six Idaho youths enrolled; that number includes 81 males and 15 females. These young men and women are between the ages of 16-18 and they either dropped out of high school or were at risk of doing so. They are now getting a second chance to complete their high school education or receive a GED certificate, which will significantly increase the chances for them to succeed in their adult lives.



Idaho Youth Challenge Cadre member Tech. Sgt. Jake Call keeps a close watch on his charges during the first week of the Idaho Youth Challenge Academy. Idaho Youth Challenge Academy opens its doors
Photo by Brig. Gen. Richard Turner.



Over 27 states now have Youth Challenge programs. Idaho's academy is located in the northern Idaho town of Pierce and serves the population of the entire State of Idaho.

"We expect this program to directly affect the lives of those who complete the 22-week course by helping them become productive members of society and steering them away from a downward spiral," said Maj. General Gary Saylor, Idaho Adjutant General. Saylor was on hand in Pierce on Jan. 20 to oversee the first day of the program.

Costs of the program are split between federal, state, corporate and private sources. The Idaho Youth Challenge Foundation, a non-profit 501(C)(3) organization affiliated with the Idaho Military Division, would like to thank corporate and private donors, which include (in no particular order): J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation, Inc., Avista Corp., Scentsy Inc., J.R. Simplot Company, Farmers Insurance, The Duke Family Foundation, Wells Fargo Bank, Pierce-

Weippe Chamber of Commerce, Support Our Troops, Inc., Townsquare Media Group West Central, Mr. Thomas Dougherty, Maj. Gen. Gary Saylor, Maj. Gen. (Retired) Larry Lafrenz, Rocky Mountain Power Foundation, Harry Stenzel Excavation & Contracting, Boise Adjusters Association of Idaho, Live, Laugh, Love, Give Inc.,

In addition to the corporate sponsors, we thank Orofino Joint School District # 171 for their donation of the school facility in Pierce.

The Academy's second class is now forming and will be seated in mid-July, 2014 and applications are being accepted. If you or somebody you know could benefit from this unique second chance, or for more information go to www.idyouthchallenge.com or call (855) ID YOUTH / (855) 439-6884.

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